

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

October 24, 1981

POLAND: New Role for the Military

Party leader Jaruzelski's move yesterday to involve the military more directly in dampening Poland's political and economic turmoil could be a risky test of the military's ability to perform in a domestic police role. [REDACTED]

The government--which assigned the military a large role in helping ensure "law and order," handling local economic problems, and "solving disputes"--apparently intends to use respect for the military to curb local unrest. The plan reportedly will be implemented within several days but does not appear to include any restrictions on civil liberties or a declaration of martial law, even though the measures are a plausible step toward some kind of martial law. [REDACTED]

The regime's plan could be designed in part to intimidate Solidarity, which yesterday decided to go ahead with a one-hour nationwide warning strike next Wednesday and threatened further strikes and a takeover of the food distribution system if some of its demands are not met. Jaruzelski may express the government's concerns and intentions during a meeting with Solidarity leader Walesa that could take place as early as today. [REDACTED]

It is unclear what role the military will play in resolving local disputes, but the government has gone far beyond its practice of using joint military-police patrols. The regime is planning to dispatch "operational groups" of seasoned conscripts led by "professional soldiers" throughout the country. The groups will work in tandem with troubleshooting teams of "government delegates." [REDACTED]

Recent incidents in Katowice and Wroclaw--where actions by the civilian police quickly drew a large and hostile crowd--may have convinced the regime that the police are not effective in enforcing its new, tougher policies. The government has moved closer to its final option because it now may be testing the reliability of its military forces to perform a domestic police function and the willingness of the Polish populace to respect the military in that role. [REDACTED]

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Reaction in Armed Forces to Extension of Service

New information on reactions by the Polish military to the two-month extension last week of military service indicates that some units may be unwilling to put down civil unrest. Conscripts in Lublin and Jelenia Gora have sent open letters to Solidarity asking for support and stating that they would not allow themselves to be used in any military action against the Polish people. [REDACTED]

The soldiers claimed that the extension was in violation of a statute adopted in 1967 governing military service, expressed concern that forces were being prepared for military action, and announced that a formal protest action would be staged soon. We do not, however, know the extent of such resentment among Polish soldiers. [REDACTED]